

Office of the Public Advocate
Jumaane D. Williams

NYCHA Recommendations

REFORMING THE REPAIR PROCESS

Recommendation Summary:

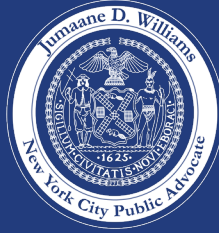
- **Create a grading system where the most serious cases are prioritized and get resolved within a shorter period of time.**
 - ◆ This can be modeled after HPD's classification system:
 - Class A - Non-hazardous
 - Class B - Hazardous
 - Class C - Immediately Hazardous
 - ◆ The current ticketing system does not lead to a timely response to tenants' urgent complaints. Often, they are closed and reopened without reason and without tenant knowledge. Tenants should sign off in agreement that work has been completed before a ticket is closed.
 - ◆ The former City Comptroller Scott Stringer found "the tools used by NYCHA's central management to oversee and track heating issues are inefficient and ineffective."¹
 - ◆ NYCHA does not have a system that tracks how long it takes to complete a repair, only listing what type it is.²
- **Better inform and update residents of issues requiring lengthy repairs, beyond posting notices in the lobby with real community outreach.**
 - ◆ Residents do not feel that NYCHA fully informs them of necessary repairs. NYCHA should hold town hall meetings with residents for periodic, transparent updates.
 - ◆ Tenants in Carlton Manor House in Queens have been without hot water since November and had to go to court to reinstate hot water.
- **Investigate substandard repairs, including the contractors directly and hold them accountable.**
 - ◆ NYCHA's inability to track repairs can impact its work to manage problems, allocate resources, and conduct necessary changes. NYCHA needs to investigate all substandard repairs with a reliable tracker system.³

¹ <https://www.thecity.nyc/2020/6/1/21277039/nycha-tenants-heat-repairs-not-tracked>

² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3vej6yUoWXY>

³ <https://comptroller.nyc.gov/reports/audit-report-on-the-new-york-city-housing-authoritys-controls-over-heat-maintenance/>





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- ◆ A Department of Investigations report in 2019 found contractors took advantage of NYCHA's contracting system and conducted poor or no repairs, without consequences.⁴ NYCHA staff usually needed to fix or do the work themselves while the contractor(s) were paid. Just recently, a contractor was caught in a bribe scheme with NYCHA staff.⁵
- **Tenants who are converted to private management under Rental Assistance Demonstration need to be provided clear guidance on how to file complaints.**
 - ◆ RAD, also known as Permanent Affordability Commitment Together (PACT) in New York City, shifts housing from Section 9 to Section 8 or a section that funds private landlords.⁶ Once under PACT, tenants no longer have NYCHA resources or federal oversight mechanisms.
 - ◆ Residents are sent between NYCHA, 311, and the management office with no solution. A recent Human Rights Watch report found PACT tenants unable to understand their lease terms, make complaints, request repairs or obtain emergency transfers.⁷ One recommendation in the report was to create clear and accessible channels for residents to use in order to make complaints or share concerns about PACT housing.
 - ◆ Tenants at the Wise Towers in Manhattan shared they fear speaking out against issues such as broken elevators and lack of trash removal as the building is under private management. Tenants feel disrespected under private management. DOI is currently investigating a series of fires at NYCHA residents that includes the Wise Towers.⁸
- **Forensic audit of funds allocated and used for repairs (Adherence to Section 9).**
 - ◆ In conjunction with investigating poor repairs, NYCHA must also conduct forensic audits of funds allocated and used for repairs. Without an adequate tracker of repairs to be made, it is hard for NYCHA to determine how to distribute funds for repairs.
 - ◆ NYCHA reportedly requires \$40 billion to do repairs, but without a reliable tracker within NYCHA it is difficult to know where this information came from.⁹ NYCHA needs a system to audit funds allocated and used for repairs.

⁴ <https://www.thecity.nyc/special-report/2019/10/7/21210785/nycha-s-250-million-no-bid-and-sometimes-no-work-repair-jobs>

⁵ <https://www.thecity.nyc/2021/9/20/22685194/nycha-bribery-investigation-contractors-millions-no-bid-jobs>

⁶ <https://www.thecity.nyc/housing/2020/2/7/21212243/what-is-rad-a-look-at-nycha-s-private-management-move>

⁷ <https://www.hrw.org/report/2022/01/27/tenant-never-wins/private-takeover-public-housing-puts-rights-risk-new-york-city>

⁸ <https://www.thecity.nyc/2022/2/3/22916949/nycha-fires-investigation-doi>

⁹ <https://www.gothamgazette.com/state/10807-housing-group-roadmap-full-nycha-funding>